

ΣΟΧΕΠΟC

conexoz

the old
& the new



the phoenix:
rising again
revisiting our history

17th edition December 2016



Editorial Staff

Kristy Webb
Tamika Weribone

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conexoz

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ConexOz is a publication that aims to validate and acknowledge those who have a lived experienced of mental illness and recognize their determination. It also acknowledges the incredible courage it takes for people to openly be themselves through their work.

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As always, we are amazed by the talent and creativity of our artists and writers. We also encourage you to submit your own work. We would love to see it!

Due to the fact that carrier pigeons are becoming harder to procure these days, please feel free to use one of the alternative methods below to contact us.

View ConexOz magazine at
www.ucwpa.org.au/conexoz

<http://mindshare.org.au/about/conexoz-magazine/>

Please e-mail electronic files to:
conexoz@ucwpa.org.au

Or mail to:
Conexoz
PO Box 288
Goodwood, SA, 5034



Various photography throughout the magazine taken by the ConexOz group. A new group has begun and we welcome creative people who wish to get involved. Contact us for more details.



AND WE ARE BACK!




It has been a while since we last published a ConexOz edition. For those of you who have eagerly anticipated a revival, we are so happy to be back and be able to share with you a rebirth of our magazine.

In this edition, we revisit some of our old creators who made ConexOz what it is today. We share with you some amazing new artists and writers who have come to join us.

We also welcome some new talent on our editorial team. This edition was made with the help of Tamika Weribone, a prolific artist, writer and photographer herself. Many thanks to her! We have a few others joining us in the near future, so watch this space and join us in welcoming them.

As always, we welcome you to contribute your art, poetry, stories and photos. Express yourself and join the voices here.



*Photo this page
For those who remember our old office at
122 Goodwood Road*

CRUSHES AND SUNSHINE

By Suzanne Siebert

I'm dressed for homemade margaritas, crushes and sunshine
I'm moving fast but you could slow down my time
I want more of watching you think, with that expression you do
I love the moments I secretly want to win over your emotions
And I want those butterflies too
I'm a girl loving being myself somewhere in the arms of fate
Take me to the bay when the sun sinks pink before the end of the day
I want a hand held momentarily, a tingled touch, walking down the beach with sandy feet
Feeling our sunburnt necks tanning down and kissed lips swollen sweet
I don't need a fancy dinner date cos the silver's polished too clean
Take me in a cuddle on a cozy couch, and do dinner homemade at your place or mine
And I like surprises, cups of tea in bed, and hugs from behind
Take me impulsively to the edge of where we are every time
Take me on a drive to nowhere, give me a picnic where I can kiss you wild
So take me to places of tickled blossomed air, drinking too much wine
A thousand colours bursting in smiles, lighten me up with your casual look, I like that style
I like a man who can laugh, and loves conversation, especially the ones without words
But you'll win me over by locking eyes and send shivers that make my eyes shine
I've already got butterflies, but I promise to share what's mine
That's what I want, that, you, and loads of time



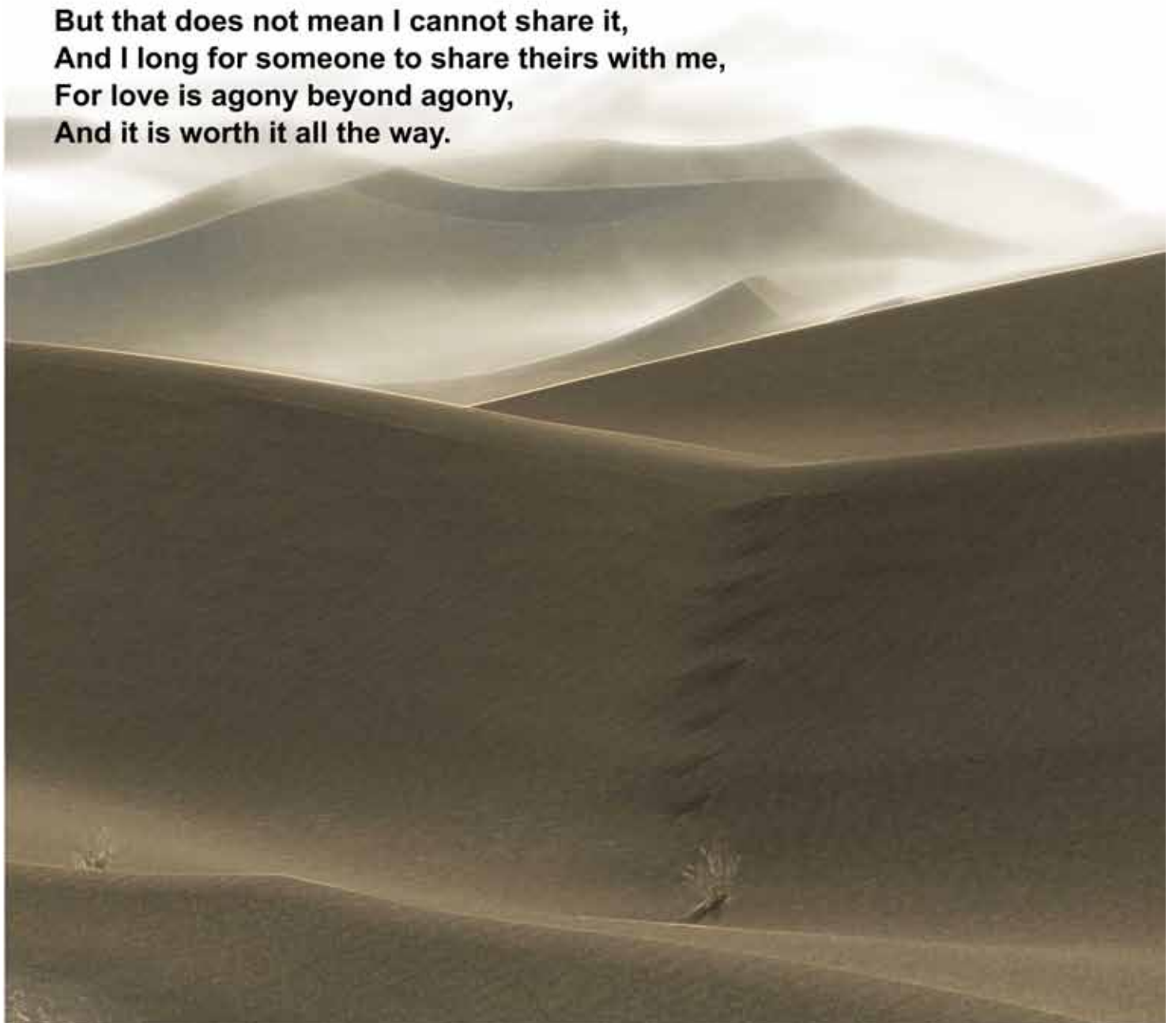
LOVE IS
Andrew C

I will never forget,
That burden that wearies my heart,
For to drop it by my side,
Would be to lose hope for the future.

For it is not just agony,
Not pain or sorrow,
It is more, it is love,
A memory of a better time.

It is everyone I have ever loved,
Everyone I have ever lost,
But I will never relent my burden,
It is all mine to bear.

But that does not mean I cannot share it,
And I long for someone to share theirs with me,
For love is agony beyond agony,
And it is worth it all the way.



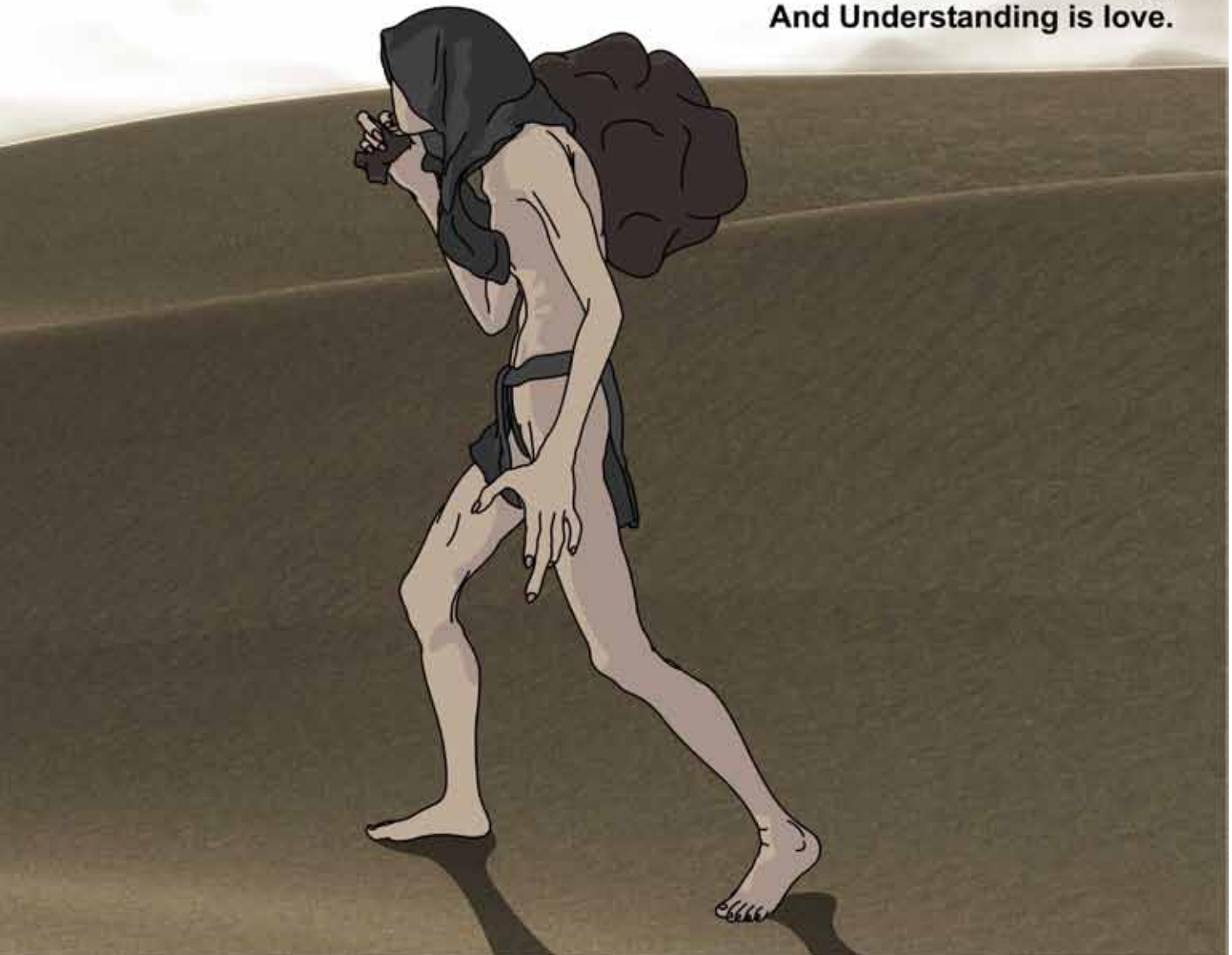
IS LOVE Chambers

Even when young turns old,
When bliss sours,
I will always hold love in this heart,
No matter how many times it breaks.

For a broken heart is not ugly,
Its wounds like a pattern on a painting,
And though the burden can be great,
Letting go completely is cowardice.

The survivor is reborn stronger,
Such can be said for love,
For it reshapes us, that company, that loss,
And even that absence only encourages us to seek.

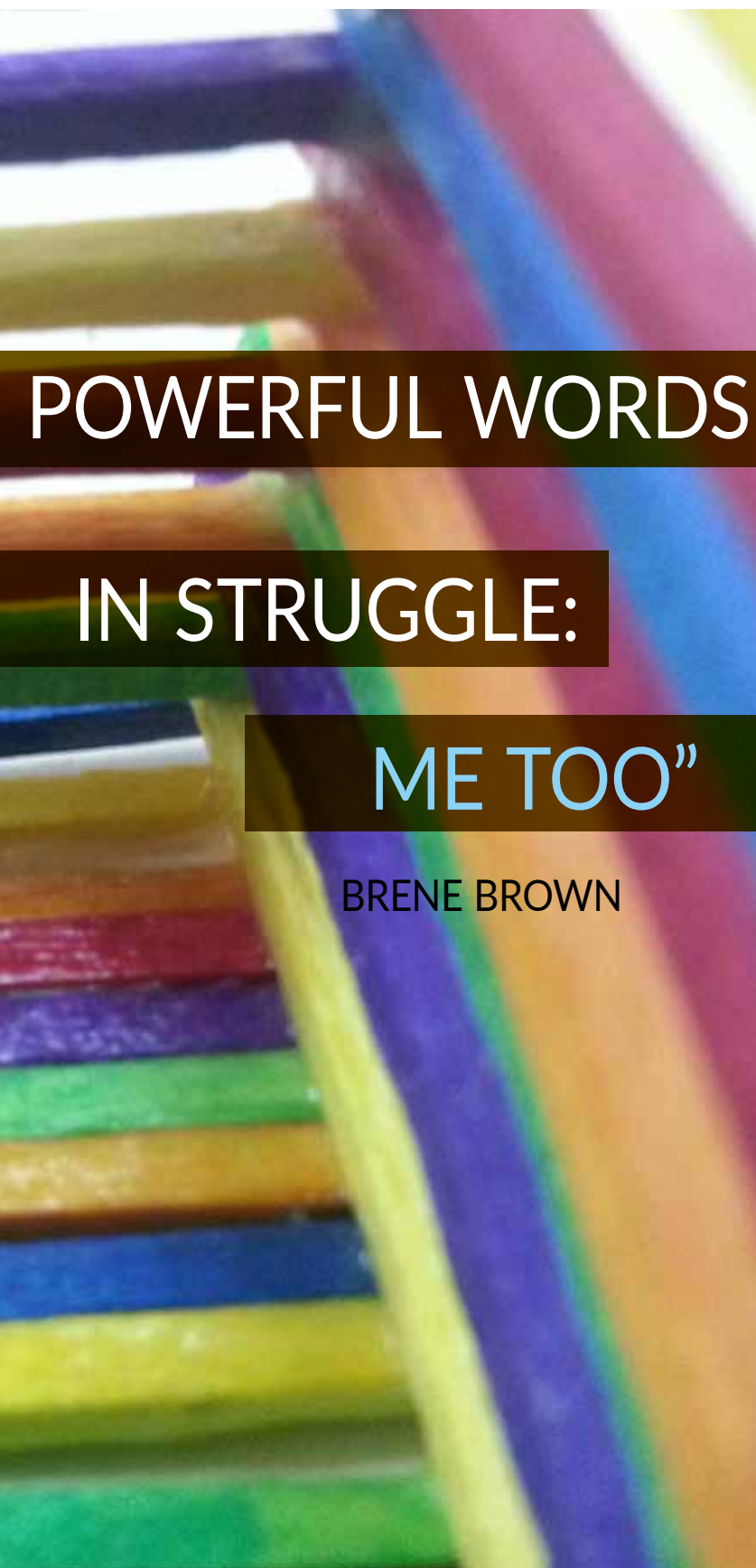
Love is light,
Light is knowledge,
Knowledge is understanding,
And Understanding is love.





“THE TWO MOST

WHEN WE’RE



POWERFUL WORDS

IN STRUGGLE:

ME TOO"

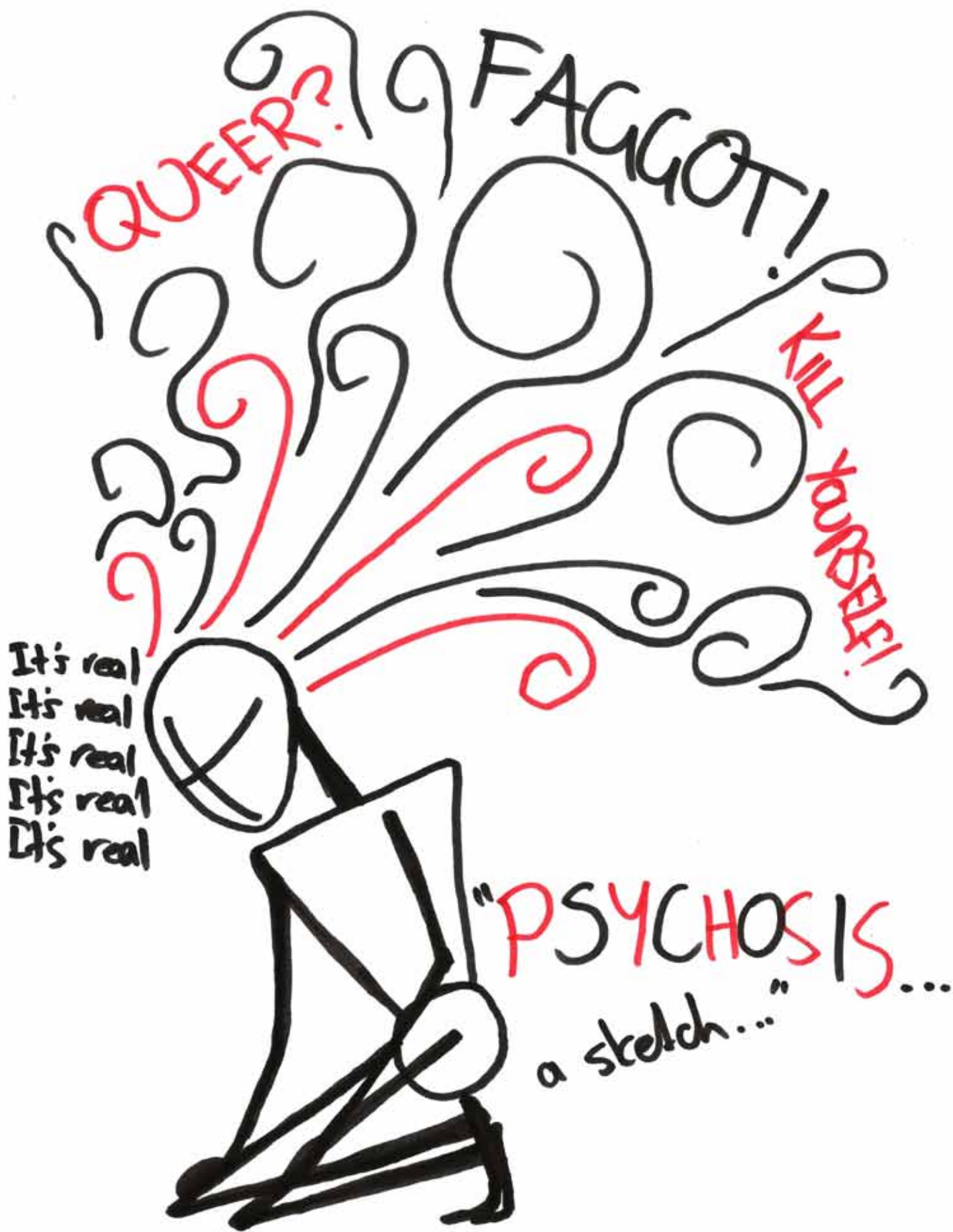
BRENE BROWN

PEER WORKERS

By Jenny Bennam

Pride
Enthusiasm
Energy
Resilience

With
Ongoing
Respect
Kindness
Enlightenment
Recovery
Self compassion



CAN YOU DECIDE

by Obsidian

My revisit of indecision;
Continual double minded vision.

Am I able to follow just one path;
I'll leave this thought with a laugh.

There is nothing anyone can do to help.

Now on to some revision,
To go over past decisions.

To see about where it all went wrong,
A time of a lot of songs.

There is no longer escape!

Flip the coin and see what follows;
Another chance to chose, right or wrong.

No telling for just how long.



by Obsidian
CAN YOU DECIDE

Artwork above
by Andy Oath

Artwork on facing page
"Psychosis... A sketch"
by Shy Haxan

Depression is the lubrication of my thoughts. It seems when I'm down I'm also at my most creative. It's at those moments I feel compelled to write. I know that there is a point, however, where I go into my darkest possible moments, and then I keep my writing private. I can get quite malicious then and I know to publicise the fact can be quite harmful. But most of the time when I'm not writing, it's because I'm pretty happy. Its sad, I find my writing not to be of the same calibre, my thoughts seem quite meek when put to paper (albeit electronic in this case) when I'm feeling good. So the snapshot of me people see here must seem rather dim.

So to another installment of 'when times are sour' in my life. Ok, they aren't all sour. Some aspects are looking fairly positive right now. But as it has been lately, each time things begin to look up, someone else hands me a little note saying 'I unlove you thiiiiis much!'

If you come from a large family, you learn early that its not good behaviour that gets the attention. If you're good, your parents just figure they don't have to look after you, you'll do

what you're supposed to and they are just grateful that they have extra time to spend with the naughty kids. Only they never mention the fact that they are grateful to you. The squeaky wheel will always get the most grease. It's a pity that phrase will last your entire life. I guess when you do everything

THE SQUEAKY WHEEL

BY

PHOEBE WOLFE

that's required of you, when you ask for so little in return, sometimes people just don't feel that they are needed. Maybe life just isn't exciting enough, maybe their egos aren't built up enough until they are constantly having to struggle to keep their shit together, until they have something completely and utterly dependant on them.

I once thought being taken for granted beat never being taken at all. Now I think I'd rather just go

unnoticed. Because when people come to rely on you, when you do what you can without being asked, sooner or later they just expect that of you all the time and forget sometimes you needed things yourself. When you say, 'its ok' and go without, next time they won't even ask you if you mind being overlooked. They'll get busy making sure those other wheels stay greased until they forget you were ever there. Then suddenly, you aren't. But, I guess you just have to remind yourself, when the only working parts have been left behind while the squeaking ones have higher priority, sooner or later its just going to end up being one very noisy ride.

So its squeak, or remain forgotten. I don't have it in me to squeak. I'd rather just not be another part on the wagon, thanks all the same. This wheel is in perfect working order, so the price has skyrocketed beyond anyone's ability to pay. It's still turning on occasion, but only when it wants to now. Value has become relative, baby.

I guess sometimes when you think things are too good to be true, they generally are.

conexto an endless landscape of empty shells.

Whispering

Discone

he sat through rain
he sat through snow

Something inside began



SORROWS BRUISES

by Suzanne Siebert

Today hits hard, tomorrow, I wear the bruises, tomorrow
Sorrow, still today there is sorrow,
See, did you see me leave, leave into the gone tomorrow
Tomorrow, you might get close, but then I might go
before we get to far away, into what is too familiarly known
1000 miles of hurt keep each thought of today's alone together
No escape either because they're chances are too narrow
Then they're eyes change, but why so young and so lost
tomorrow, let me be, let me see, let me stay
Take me at random or don't take me at all, no one has, so how could it be bad
Or stay away, stay your distance, keep or set me apart
Why is there always so much of never enough
Can I go next, or is there a line, or do I need to wait til I lose time
Not even a blink, not even stopping for a last looking glance
For a revelation to come, cos it's marching straight past
Bruise upon emotional bruise
Only part of me is here, don't tell me otherwise
I wear too many scars of feeling
No, I'm loved, I'm loved by me, I want to be tranquil or tranquilised
Tranquility, tranquility shared, was simple with me
In the lace of clouds, amongst the waters of unborn child's sea
Their time is still untouched, they are still lucky
But the ones in my life, did they leave or never arrive
Is there a door I should I knock on, are they home or are they even here
If I phone it only went to answer, no question about that, not even later
Maybe if I sang I'd feel alive, I don't talk much about anything
No need to listen to what is thought of as nothing
I need just a little, of little things, or they just ache or sting
Making my day overcast, tears hurt too, even with blossom in the air of spring
Bruise upon emotional bruise
There is only half of me here, don't tell me otherwise
I wear too many scars of feeling
No, I'm loved, I'm loved by me
It's the only relief to finding tranquillity
Tranquil, tranquillity shared was simple with me

*Photo on facing page
by Tamika Weribone*

Conexoz Jouney

Early Beginnings

A conversation, the best way to start these things. Back in 2008, one of our very creative and talented Peer Workers had a conversation with a very creative and talented consumer. The question was asked, "why is there nothing by us? A place where we can show what we can do, where we can have our voices heard? We hear all the time about our diagnosis, our medication, all the things we have to do. What about our experiences of this?"



Welcome to issue 3 of Nexus newsletter

December 2008

Editorial group for this edition: Glenn, Helen, Linton, Seamus

and MACI, team representatives.

Thanks to the many contributors.

Wishing you freedom, health and happiness

Curious and want to be involved - email: nexus@conexoz.com.au

Tentative Steps

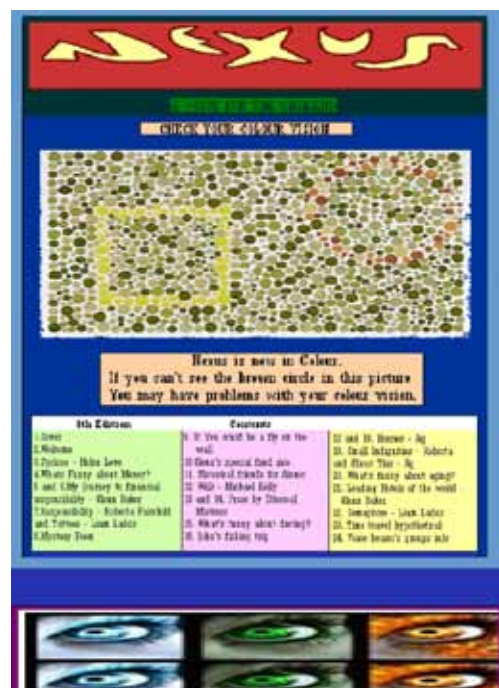
And so, Nexus was born. A small black and white newsletter.

Nexus - meaning - noun

1. a connection or series of connections linking two or more things.

2. a central or focal point.

It offered questions, ways to interact, a place to be heard. It offered a central point where people could connect.



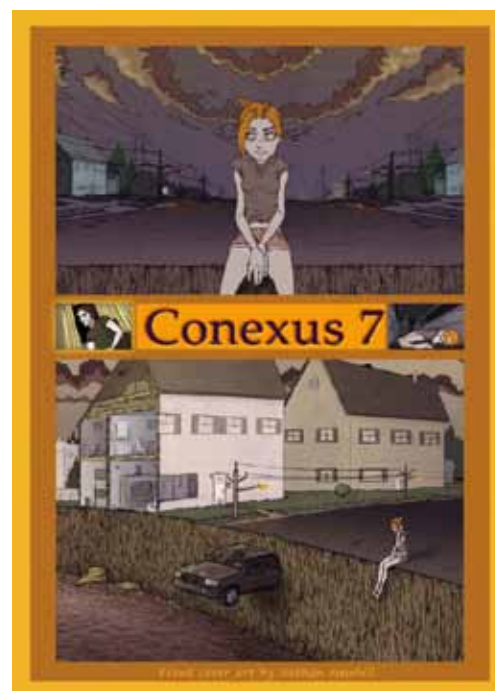


Please note: This is the small version of Nexus issue 5 and therefore the graphics are low quality.
Contact us on + 8157 9050 or info@conexusmagazine.com. We are happy to send deliver print editions to you. :)

Bursting with Colour!

It wasn't the carefully sanitised version of clinical mental health, but the powerful, emotional, sometimes dark but always inspirational side of real experiences, real talents of real people who live with challenging realities on a daily basis. A way for people to connect, to say "me too."

Nexus soon took off, thanks to many hard working hours from people volunteering their time and effort. Every page was filled with dedication and strength. And before too long, COLOURS!

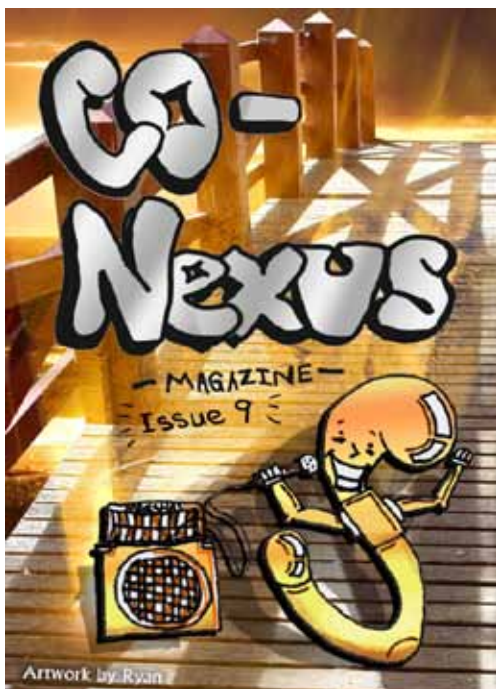


Growing and Evolving

Many who had hidden their talents before, now started to come forward. They found a way to express themselves, a way to show they were not alone. As the magazine gained ground, it was realised that another with the same name existed, so a meeting was held with contributors and the question was asked, "what to call ourselves now?" Given all the "connections" people were making through the shared experiences, the "Nexus" name evolved to "Conexus," honouring its past and opening the next door.

Moving forward

Conexus had started making a name for itself. It had a way of allowing people to speak their own truths, without fear or shame. It spoke to many and became a platform for people to discover their strengths. It opened doors for many who previously never had the courage to speak and sparked new discussions. It gave people a way to explain how they felt to others and started the process to reduce stigma. People were able to show off their talents, rather than their medical labelling.



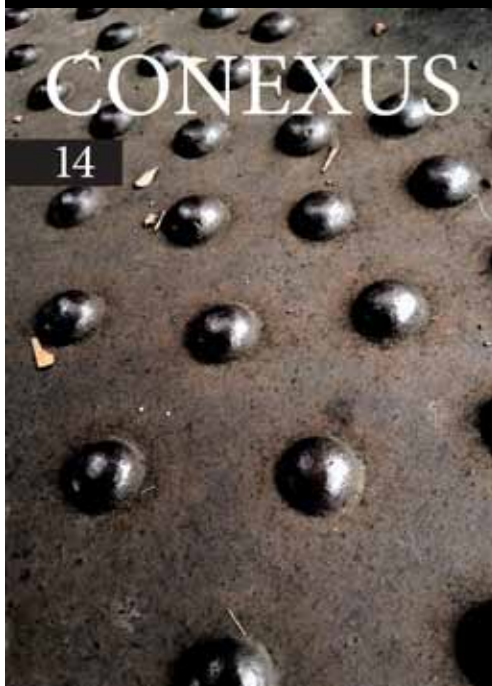
Across the Country!

Soon, Conexus was moving into national conferences. It had its own day set aside each week to be maintained and from there the name was changed again to represent its new national subscriber status.

From "Connects Us" it became "Connects Oz" while still retaining the little nod to its origins. In the ConexOz art group, everyone got together and came up with ideas for a logo. From here, ConexOz was going strong and steady for a few years.

But sadly, as these things tend to do, for various reasons, the magazine quietly went into hibernation. Many kept it in their heart though, and have been working hard, waiting for its chance to wake.





Reawakenings!

Finally, after just over a year and a half (wow, it must have been tired!) ConexOz was reawoken, bright and eager to discover the next stage in its development. With much new talent and many new places to explore. Where do you think it could go next? Whatever happens from here, we are all excited to discover. We welcome everyone with a lived experience to contribute and help us grow.

Join us in welcoming back the beautiful ConexOz!





PEER WORKER = SELF DETERMINED COMPASSIONATE

Are Peer Workers part of the mental health work force? Do we want to be included, to become professionals?

The need for recognition is great but will increasing the study expectations bring with it a decrease in the beauty and power of the one to one sharing. Will we get tangled in the technicalities? Increase in intellectual expectations trade off the raw beauty of peer work.

To be able to accept an individual as a whole, without judgement and to share the power of the journey with each one of us owning our own story an honouring the self that truly is.

Will the toning down of the emotional bonding with regulations add anything or will it just tighten the straight jacket tighter.

The peer work needs to be recognized for their strength and valued for their pure honesty, we are not there to rescue the drowning soul

by dragging them out of the brain swamp but to simply help them recognise that they can touch the ground and wade their way through the swamp with the peer worker beside them to help stabilize them when they trip but not to pick them up and carry them.

My concern if the peerwork evolution is not handled with love and special care will it become like nursing which has become more ridged, more stern and more removed. What was a once a calling now it is often a job.

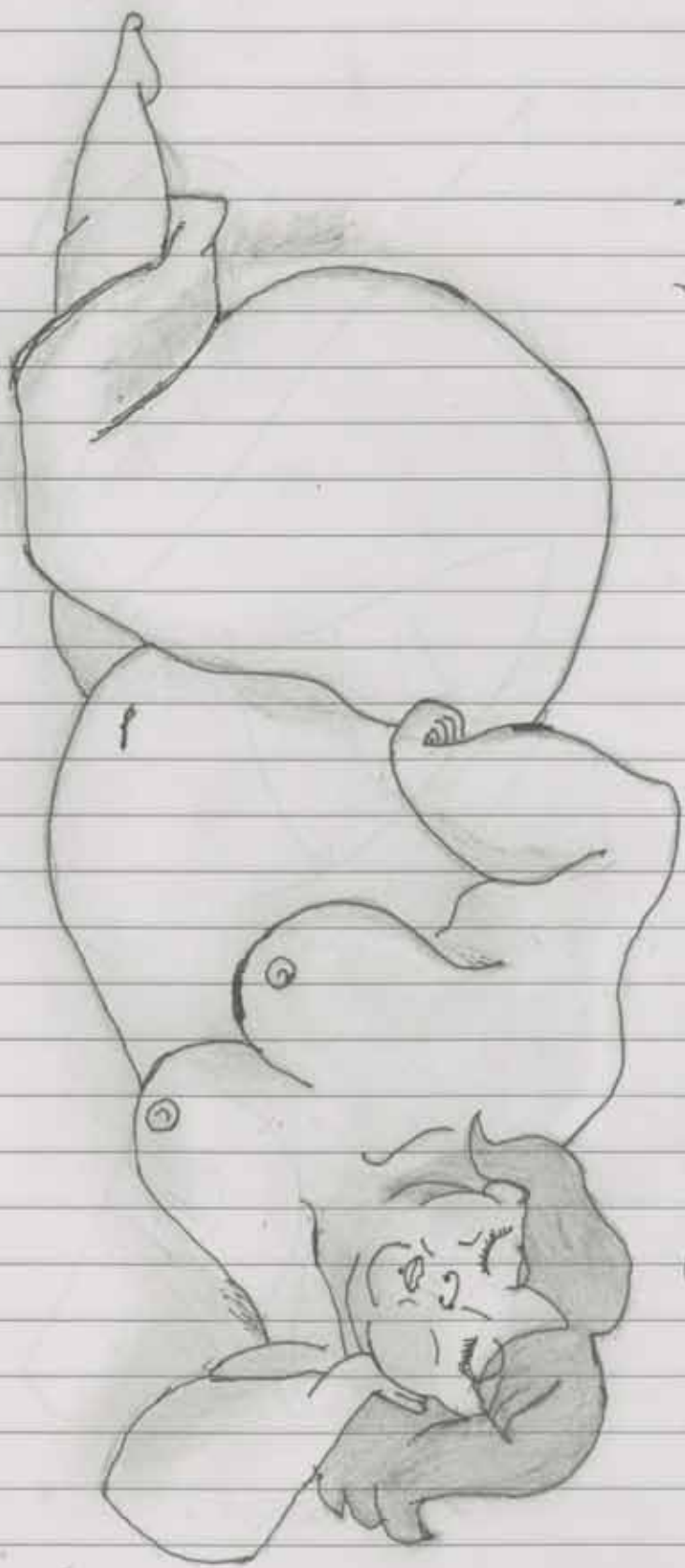
I believe peer work is beyond a job. It involves the sharing of life experience as equals.

Can I ask of those who have read through this to really think of the power of the role of Peer Workers? What skills do we value? What qualities and values are needed?

Are we part of the mental health work force or does our willingness and courage to share our story while allowing others to share with us put us on a different field.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF PEER WORK

by Just Jenny



FAT
Non-Binary
Pride

Artwork above
by Salem Ulvr

Artwork on facing page
by Patrick Ried





CUTTING

by Tamika Weribone

Everyday I have to see them
See the scars that are the evidence that I'm not okay
I put on a mask of happy for the ones I love
And I forget for just a moment that I'm dying
But then I look down and see the lines
See the lines of my defeat
They are the evidence that I am weak
I can't do it, even with help
I still feel myself falling even though I'm holding the rope
When I fill up with all of my pain
I need to do something
To feel like myself again
So I grab my blade and hold it tight
Clench my fist and cut
At first the pain is hard but I seek more
So I cut again even deeper
I watch the blood trail down my arm
Mesmerized
I just sit there for a while
Then I come back to reality
Clean myself up and continue with my life
I feel better now



by Tamika Weribone



photos on both pages by

JEN MARTIN

Jen has quite a lot of photography. She enjoys mostly landscapes and animals. You can email her about her photos at

magnifiquephotography453@yahoo.com

Can you imagine a world without pain?
Can you imagine love without pain?
Can you see the sky above,
Can you see a world without love?
Is your heart just an organ that pumps
Blood to your brain?
Or is your grey sky simply rain?
But without rain could you ascertain,
That life is sometimes plain.
And in those times of boredom and
Doubt is it not then I pull my pen out,
And lay down some words,
That if I did not, would never be heard?

I am no great poet,
sometimes I can rhyme,
but if not for rain,
I would not have time,
to drink from the sky

Its beautiful grace.
All I wish is a smile on your face.
For if you fail to hear

My plea; or take me seriously,
then only nearer my God to thee.
I cannot explain the way I think.
But next time it rains

Pause – think – drink

Andy Oath

**CAN YOU
IMAGINE
A WORLD
WITHOUT
PAIN?**



THE REAL WORLD

BY JONATHON
CROUCH

I've got sadness inside me. It fills me up and I can't see anymore. I don't think there is anything in the world other than darkness. Everything else is a dream.

This sadness, it's so heavy.

Normal sadness is normal. But if it lays on top of you for too long you get this. I think it breaks all your dreams and all you can see is what I call 'the real world'

The real world is nothing. No light, no sound, no meaning, no words, no life.

Think about it, I might be right.

Maybe existence itself was never meant to happen. Maybe it isn't happening.

What would you choose? The real world, the honest world, the world of knowing?

The eye that sees through illusions of hope.
Or the delusion that there is some meaning of any sort coursing through this horror.

I can hear the darkness calling me, pulling me. Life is just an accident that keeps happening. Soon enough the balance will be restored and we will all return to the real world.

We will all be nothing. In a world of nothing. In no time. In no space. Nothing but the real world.

What would you choose?

What I have written here is riddled with contradiction. My favourite one. I can see the real world. I have been there.

But if the real world exists and therefore none of us exist: how could I write this? And how could you read it?

Are we dreaming? Is it real? And ultimately, do I give a fuck?

I'd love to say that: 'it's a nice place to visit, but you wouldn't want to live there'

But it isn't.

Its fucking horrible.

And I would gladly throw myself in front of anyone walking towards it and just hold them tight. They'll stop walking or They'll carry me with them. Either way they don't have to do it alone.

And if you're not alone, you'll never get to the real world.





INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS

by Salem Ulvr

Down in the furtherest pits of despair, where no one can reach me.

Deep into my troublesome mind.

Voices spew toxic words at me, sometimes in a whisper other times at a yell.

How to banish them completely has always eluded me.

They long ago latched on to the recesses of my mind and can lie dormant for long periods of time,
like any good parasite.

In the wells of distress and desperation they try to drown me, over and over again.

They don't want me to die but they don't want me to live either.

Trapped in the darkest of places I suffer their torment and I take their abuse time after time,
sometimes it comes in overt and horrendous forms other times more subtle and insidious.



When things are bad and they have caught me in their web it is near impossible to escape them.
They gnaw at every fibre of my being, they cut through all the defences I've worked so hard to instil
in myself and they replace it with endless anxiety and hopelessness.
Deep down in the pits of despair it is so easy for them to isolate me from others and to make me
question what I know to be true.
My only reprieve is distraction but that gets harder and harder to do.
All I can hope to do is to challenge them, however exhausting that might be.
I have to keep trying and struggling somehow, I can't let them control me.
Not again, not ever again.

I AM NOT UNWELL

by Nathan Higginson



I am not unwell...

I am someone who sometimes is viewed as being “too” emotional and sometimes not emotional enough.

I am someone who sometimes sees things from a skewed “dysfunctional” perspective that doesn’t necessarily reveal a “true” picture and also someone who sometimes sees things clearly despite what he is being told.

I am someone who sometimes thinks too much and sometimes not enough.

I am someone who sometimes says too much, who sometimes says things I regret, who sometimes really means what I say even if it is not being heard and sometimes I barely speak at all.

I am someone who is sometimes sorry and sometimes someone who is not.

I am someone who is visible sometimes and hidden at other times.

I am someone who sometimes feels too much and sometimes feels nothing at all.

I am someone who sometimes laughs and someone who sometimes can barely raise a smile
I am someone who sometimes cries even though sometimes I don’t understand why.

I am someone who has underdeveloped skills in some areas and someone who is highly skilled in others.

I am someone who sometimes feels frail and weak and someone who sometimes feels strong and powerful.

I am someone who has survived, who lives, who changes, who grows and

sometimes I am someone who believes he is nothing at all.

All of these things amount to one thing...

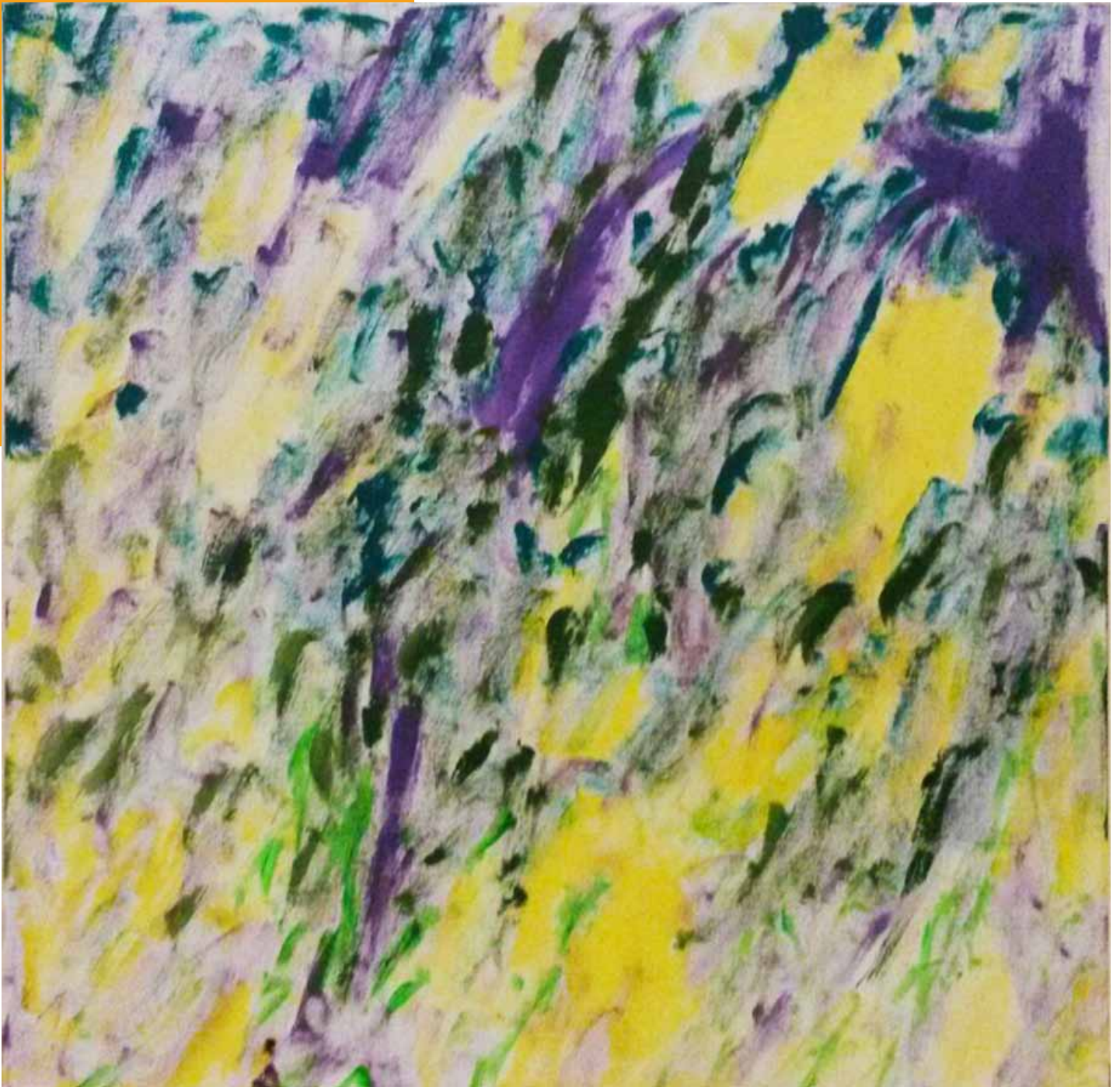
I am Nathan Higginson and I am someone who is complex and that complexity makes me human and my humanity is not an illness to be cured.

Lets start the discussion. In the next year, we are hoping to start the “I am not unwell” project. We will start the campaign to reclaim our experiences, reclaim the language and the identities of people living with mental health.

Write to us and tell us:

your preferred identity
your preferred terms
or how you experience your diagnosis. Write your definition for it, or what you prefer to call it.

Lets create our own terms for who we are.



In wee wee town
Lived a real Pooh Pooh
Twas the joy of him
That made his Mother give in to his every whim
She bought him an instrument made of wood
And there he sat wailing at the moon and playing real good
Waiting for fame and fortune to smile at him
And there he sat thinking he was Tiny Tim
A fairytale figure who liked dim sims
With long locks and hooked nose
Striking a momentary pose
He looked at his feet and disappeared between his toes
And along came the three bears
Who were not exactly squares
And left goldilocks to wonder why
She had to fly

*Artwork
by Patrick Ried*

The Unknown Poem

by The Unknown Poet

ConexOz would like to acknowledge and thank the wonderful folks down at Kazbah on Goodwood for all their support and allowing us to take over the place regularly. We highly recommend this lovely cafe!



Kazbah on Goodwood - 143 Goodwood Rd, Goodwood SA



www.ucwpa.org.au/conexoz

conexoz@ucwpa.org.au

ConexOz presents a unique experience for people who find themselves misunderstood and disempowered within a society that is often perplexed by abstract thinking, profound sensitivities or unorthodox behaviours. It aims to create a voice for the unheard and an opportunity for those who have experienced challenging realities. It inspires people to express themselves in a way that acknowledges the dignity of risk,. It embraces diversity and values the strengths behind each individual journey, regardless of stage.

ConexOz encourages all to confront stigma through innovation and creative expression in order to break the socially imposed silence and isolation.

